

for hit was lyk a thing of glas,
But that hit shoon ful more clere;
But of what congeled matere
Hit was, I niste redely.
At the laste espyed I,
And found that hit was, every deel,
A roche of yse, and not of steel.
Thoughte I: By Seynt Thomas of Kent!
This were a feble foundement
To bilden on a place hye;
He oughte him litel glorifye
That heron bilt, God so me save!
Ho saw I al the half ygrave
With famous folkes names fele,
That had ybeen in mochele wele,
And hir fames wyde yblowe.
But wel unethes coude I knowe
Any lettres for to rede
Hir names by; for, out of drede,
They were almost of, throwed so,
That of the lettres oon or two
Was molte away of every name,
So unfamous was were hir fame;
But men seyn: What may ever laste?
Ho gan I in myn herte caste,
That they were molte away with hete,
And not away with stormes bete.
for on that other syde I sey
Of this hille, that northward lay,
How hit was writen ful of names
Of folk that hadden grete fames
Of olde tyme, and yit they were
As freshe as men had writen hem there
The selve day right, or that houre
That I upon hem gan to poure.
But wel I wiste what hit made;
Hit was conserved with the shade,
Al this wrytinge that I sy,
Of a castel, that stood on hy,
And stood eek on so cold a place,
That hete mighte hit not deface.
Ho gan I up the hille to goon,
And fond upon the coppe a woon,
That alle the men that ben on lyve
Ne han the cunning to descryve
The beautee of that ilke place,
Ne coude casten no compace
Swich another for to make,
That mighte of beautee be his make,
Ne be so wonderliche ywrought;
That hit astonieth yit my thought,
And maketh al my wit to swinke
On this castel to bethinke.
So that the grete craft, beautee,
The cast, the curiositee
Ne can I not to yow devyse,
My wit ne may me not suffyse.
At na theles al the substance
I have yit in my remembrance;
for why me thoughte, by Seynt Gyle!
Al was of stone of beryle,
Bothe castel and the tour,
And eek the halle, and every bour,

Withouteen pees or joininges,
But many subtil compassinges,
Babewinnes and pinacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw; and ful eek of windowes,
As flakes falle in grete snowes.
And eek in ech of the pinacles
Weren sondry habitacles,
In whiche stoden, al withoute,
ful the castel, al aboute,
Of alle maner of ministrals,
And gestiours, that tellen tales
Bothe of weping and of game,
Of al that longeth unto fame.
Her herde I pleyen on an harpe
That souned bothe wel and sharpe,
Orpheus ful craftely,
And on his syde, faste by,
Sat the harper Orion,
And Eacides Chiron,
And other harpers many oon,
And the Bret Glascurion;
And smale harpers with her glees
Seten under hem in sees,
And gonne on hem upward to gape,
And countrefete hem as an ape,
Or as craft countrefeteth kinde.
Ho saugh I stonden hem behinde,
Afer fro hem, al by hemselfe,
Many thousand tymes twelve,
That maden loude menstrelays
In cornemuse and shalmys,
And many other maner pype,
That craftely begonne pype
Bothe in doucet and in rede,
That ben at festes with the brede;
And many floute and litling, home,
And pypes made of grene corne,
As han thise litel herde, gromes,
That kepen bestes in the bromes.
Her saugh I than Atiteris,
And of Athenes dan Pseustis,
And Marcia that lost her skin,
Bothe in face, body, and chin,
for that she wolde envyen, lo!
To pypen bet then Apollo.
Ther saugh I famous, olde and yonge,
Pypers of the Duche tonge,
To lerne love, daunces, springes,
Reyes, and these straunge thinges.
Ho saugh I in another place
Stonden in a large space,
Of hem that maken bloody soun
In trumpe, beme, and clarioun;
for in fight and blood/shedinge
Is used gladly clariouninge.
Her herde I trumpe Messenus,
Of whom that speketh Virgilius.
Ther herde I Joab trumpe also,
Theodomas, and other mo;
And alle that used clarioun
In Cataloigne and Aragon,
That in hir tyme famous were

To lerne, saugh I trumpe there.
Her saugh I sitte in other sees,
Oleyinge upon sondry glees,
Whiche that I cannot nevene,
No then sterres been in hevne,
Of whiche I nil as now not ryme,
for ese of yow, and losse of tyme;
for tyme ylost, this knowen ye,
for no way may recovered be.
Her saugh I pleyen jogelours,
Magiciens and tregetours,
And phitonesses, charmeresses,
Olde wiches, sorceresses,
That use exorsisaciouns;
And eek these fumigaciouns;
And clerkes eek, which conne wel
Al this magyke naturel,
That craftely don hir ententes,
To make in certeyn ascendentes,
Images, lo, through which magyk
To make a man ben hool or syk.
Ther saugh I thee, queen Medea,
And Circes eke, and Calipsa;
Ther saugh I Hermes Ballenus,
Lymote, and eek Simon Magus.
Ther saugh I, and knew hem by name,
That by such art don men han fame.
Ther saugh I Colle tregetour
Upon a table of sicamour
Pleye an uncouth thing to telle;
I saugh him carien a wind melle
Under a walsh note shale.
What shuld I make lenger tale
Of al the peple that I say,
fro hennas into domesday?
Han I had al this folk beholde,
And fond me lous, and noght yholde,
And eft ymused longe whyle
Upon these walles of beryle,
That shoon ful lighter than a glas,
And made wel more than hit was
To semen, every thing, ywis,
As kinde thing of fames is;
I gan forth romen til I fond
The castel yate on my right hond,
Which that so wel corven was
That never swich another nas;
And yit hit was by aventure
Ywrought, as often as by cure.
I nedeth noght yow for to tellen,
To make yow to longe dwellen,
Of this yates florissinges,
Ne of compasses, ne of kervinges,
Ne how they hatte in masoneries,
As, corbets fulle of imageries.
But, Lord! so fair hit was to shewe,
for hit was al with gold behewe.
But in I wente, and that anon;
Ther mette I crying many oon:
A larges, larges, hold up wel!
God save the lady of this pel,
Oure owne gentil lady fame,
And hem that wilnen to have name

Of us! Thus herde I cryen alle,
And faste comen out of halle,
And shoken nobles and sterlinges.
And somme crowned were as kinges,
With crounes wroght ful of losenges;
And many riban, and many frenges
Were on hir clothes trewely.
Ho atte laste aspyed I
That pursevautes and heraudes,
That cryen riche folkes laudes,
Hit weren alle; and every man
Of hem, as I yow tellen can,
Had on him throwen a vesture,
Which that men clepe a cote/armure,
Enbrowded wonderliche riche,
Although they nere nought yliche.
But noght nil I, so mote I thryve,
Been aboute to descryve
Al these armes that ther weren,
That they thus on hir cotes beren,
for hit to me were impossible;
Men mighte make of hem a bible
Twenty foot thikke, as I trowe.
for certeyn, whoso coude yknowe
Mighte ther alle the armes seen
Of famous folk that han ybeen
In Auffrike, Europe, and Asye,
Sith first began the chevalrye.
Of how shulde I now telle al this?
Ne of the halle eek what nede is
To tellen yow, that every wal
Of hit, and floor, and roof and al
Was plated half a fote thikke
Of gold, and that nas nothing wikke,
But, for to prove in alle wyse,
As fyn as ducat in Venyse,
Of whiche to lyte al in my pouche is?
And they wer set as thikke of nouchis
fulle of the fynest stoness faire,
That men rede in the Lapidaire,
As greses grown in a mede;
But hit were al to longe to rede
The names; and therefore I pace.
At in this riche lusty place,
That fames halle called was,
ful moche prees of folk ther nas,
Ne crouding, for to mocheil prees.
But al on hye, above a dees,
Sitte in a see imperial,
That maad was of a rubee al,
Which that a carbuncle is ycalled,
I saugh, perpetually ystalled,
A feminyne creature;
That never formed by nature
Nas swich another thing yseye.
for altherfirst, soth for to seye,
Me thoughte that she was so lyte,
That the lengthe of a cubyte
Was lenger than she semed be;
But thus sone, in a whyle, she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte,
That with hir feet she therthe reighte,
And with hir heed she touched hevne,